

Team Europe Democracy Initiative

United for Democracy



The EU has always been a promoter of democracy, human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law, across the world and within its own borders. The EU and its Member States (MS) remain the biggest donors for democracy support.

Nowadays, democratic values are being strongly challenged with a global decline of liberal democracy. An increase in executive power, erosion of democratic norms, and a constriction of fundamental freedoms are evident worldwide, even in consolidated democracies. This decline, exacerbated by increased geopolitical tensions, necessitates a re-evaluation of our approaches. The COVID-19 pandemic has further strained democratic governance and has been used in some countries as a pretext for further repression, power centralisation, and suppression of oversight mechanisms. Globally, trust in democracy has fallen further as restrictions on civil liberties have intensified anti-government sentiments.

Reversing negative trends requires joint efforts to promote and protect democracy and unite messaging against human rights violations and civil liberties abuses. A coordinated approach includes raising awareness about the merits of democracy and consolidating efforts to address human rights abuses

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and civil liberty violations. The many advantages of democracy over an authoritarian system should also be highlighted. In countries governed by the rule of law, businesses can operate with reliability, fostering stability and trust, including in international trade. Within many partner countries, the EU and its MS leverage existing coordination structures to enhance and unify democracy support initiatives.

Focusing on efficiency and impact, the Team Europe Initiatives integrate interventions more deeply. Enhanced synergy and strategic alignment are actively pursued through thematic exchange groups across EU and MS. This is where Team Europe Democracy

(TED) Initiative comes in, as a flexible and demand-driven platform that encourages increased cooperation, supporting the adoption of unified implementation approaches, pooling resources, and identifying strategic priority areas for the EU in the face of emerging global challenges. It also shapes the narrative on the advantages of democracy against the current global backsliding.

Objective

TED Initiative was launched in 2021 and is a global thematic Team Europe Initiative (TEI) to promote democracy and human rights worldwide. With 16 EU MS (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden) and Switzerland (as an observer), TED works to provide a unified, strategic European response to democracy support. The established TED Secretariat steers efforts for this worldwide objective.

The TED initiative has three main pillars:

- (I) Research on democratic support best practices and policies
- (II) TED Network (global level)
- (III) Providing expertise at the country level.

The provision of support to selected partner countries is done through an experts database. The experts assist EU Delegations and EU MS in operationalising TEIs and/or developing joint democracy actions, with the aim of strengthening the coordination and complementarity of European interventions for democracy support.

The TED Secretariat is responsible for managing the TED Network and providing expertise. Research and analysis activities continue to be carried out by EPD and RSF under TED grants, as well as by I-IDEA and Carnegie.

The TED Network is one key output of TED, designed to facilitate information exchange and strategic dialogue. It enhances cross-regional collaboration on democracy support and supports joint

initiatives on the thematic priorities. Its modular structure enables the working groups to focus on specific themes or emerging needs. The priority themes are:

- Accountability and Rule of Law
- Political and Civic Participation
- Information Integrity.

The working groups are led by EU MS, TED Network members and DG INTPA with support of the TED Secretariat.

The Network is composed of EU institutions, EU MS and their implementing agencies, individual civil society organisations (CSOs) or networks, think tanks, universities and research centres based in Europe and engaged in promoting democracy and human rights worldwide. Europe-based multilateral organisations engaged in democracy promotion can also join.

Governance Structure

The TED Secretariat (represented by staff members of GIZ and Enabel) functions as a project management unit and works closely with the TED Coordinator from DG INTPA and with the MPCA Governance Board, constituted of members of DG INTPA, BMZ, GIZ and Enabel. The MPCA Board also supports the Steering Committee, consisting of 16 EU MS, their implementing agencies, plus Switzerland (observer), DG INTPA as Committee Chair and other DGs. The TED Secretariat manages the TED Network and a Pool of Democracy Support Experts. The TED Secretariat is responsible for the overall knowledge management, for regular exchanges with the consortia led by I-DEA and dissemination of data and research produced by members of the TED Network and like-minded institutions. Both GIZ and Enabel contribute to the visibility of the TED initiative, organise events and dialogues, develop conceptual approaches and facilitate TED Network working groups meetings.

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